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# EPA Environmental News

Superfund Records Center  
NAVAL WEAPONS INDUSTRIAL RESERVE PLANT  
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## EPA PROPOSES FOUR NEW ENGLAND SITES TO SUPERFUND NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST

BOSTON -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today proposed four New England sites for inclusion on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL informs the public of sites that warrant further investigation to determine if they pose risks to public health or the environment. The four proposed sites are: 1) the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (U.S. Navy) in Kittery, ME; 2) the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) in Bedford, MA; 3) the South Weymouth Naval Air Station in South Weymouth, MA; and 4) the Materials Technology Laboratory (U.S. Army) in Watertown, MA.

Today's action brings the total number of proposed and final sites nationwide to 1270. New England now has 7 proposed and 86 final sites on the National Priorities List.

The proposed sites will be listed in the Federal Register Wednesday and available for public comment. EPA will make final decisions on these sites in a future NPL update, following a 30-day comment period.

Federal facilities proposed to or included on the NPL are subject to all requirements of the Superfund law, in the same manner as private sites. Proposal to the NPL also ensures that investigation and cleanup of hazardous waste at these facilities will be conducted under EPA oversight.

The following are brief summaries of the four sites proposed in New England:



Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (U.S. Navy), Kittery, Maine

The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard was established in 1800 on Seavey Island in the Piscataqua River. In the past, the Shipyard was used for the construction of wooden ships, then submarines for WWII, and now the Shipyard overhauls modern submarines. More than 30 source areas in which hazardous wastes have been stored, deposited, spilled, and/or treated exist at the Shipyard.

Among the contaminants found at the site are volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and heavy metals (chromium, lead, cadmium). Resources potentially threatened by past waste handling practices at the Shipyard include tidal wetlands bordering Seavey Island; ground water on Seavey Island; and the Piscataqua River. The contact for Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is Jim Tayon, Environmental Affairs, (207) 438-3832.

Maine now has a total of 1 proposed and 9 final Superfund sites.

Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant, Bedford, Massachusetts

The Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) is located on along Hartwell Road. The 46-acre plant was constructed in 1952 as a facility for the design, fabrication, and testing of prototype weapons equipment, such as missile guidance and control systems. Waste generation at NWIRP has resulted from laboratory research, electroplating operations, and vehicle and aircraft maintenance. Contaminants found at the site include VOCs, petroleum products, waste paints, solvents, and thinners.

The chief concern at the NWIRP site is the potential threat to area ground water resources. The Navy has determined that VOCs are widely distributed in ground water across the site, and is presently designing a Short-term Remedial Measure (STM). The STM will contain ground water migrating from the northwest area of the site, which has the highest levels of ground water contamination. The STM will abate and prevent existing or potential VOC contamination of drinking water supplies and environmentally sensitive areas.

The contact for NWIRP is Art Mathers, Public Affairs Officer, (215) 595-0613.

South Weymouth Naval Air Station, South Weymouth, Massachusetts

The South Weymouth Naval Air station occupies approximately 1,442 acres of land in South Weymouth, and extends into Abington and Rockland. The U.S. Navy acquired the property in 1941, and originally used it as a support facility for military airships. Activities currently performed at the Naval Air Station include aircraft maintenance, refueling, personnel training and housing, and administrative support services.

Hazardous wastes were reportedly disposed of in three onsite landfills. Other potential onsite sources of contamination include the Firefighting Training Area, storage tanks for waste oil, oily wastes and fuels, and the sewage treatment plant.

The potential threat to ground water resources is the primary concern at the Naval Air Station. Approximately 74,000 people



receive drinking water from wells within 4 miles of the site, and there are recreational fisheries and wetlands along the Old Swamp River and French Stream/Indian Head River watersheds. At this time, none of the drinking water in the area appears to have been affected by the Naval Air Station site.

The contact for the Naval Air Station is LT Jerry Inella, Public Affairs Officer, (617) 786-2607.

Materials Technology Laboratory (U.S. Army), Watertown, Massachusetts

The U.S. Army Materials Technology Laboratory (MTL), commonly known as the Watertown Arsenal, occupies 47.5 acres in Watertown, on the north bank of the Charles River. The active installation encompasses 36.5 acres, while the remaining 11 acres were eased to the State in 1920. Currently, the laboratory researches, develops, processes, and manufactures superior materials for incorporation into Army systems.

The Army has documented soil, ground water, surface water, and sediment contamination at MTL and the adjacent Charles River which is attributable, in part, to past waste handling practices at MTL. Contaminants include VOCs and semi-VOCs, PCBs, and inorganic elements.

Contamination at the site and in the Charles River, if left unchanged, may pose certain risks. These potential risks may affect on-site residents, on-site workers, or recreational users of the Charles River and park. The current condition of the Charles River environment may also present a risk to the fish and other aquatic organisms. At this time, none of the drinking water in the area appears to be affected by the site.

The contact for MTL is the Public Affairs Office at (617) 923-5278.

Massachusetts now has a total of 5 proposed and 26 final Superfund sites.

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